



The Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ -
Will be sending a missions delegation to Africa to visit
one of the important *“Hidden Histories”* of the U.C.C.

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST’S ROLE IN THE BIRTH OF THE MODERN AFFORDABLE HOUSING MOVEMENT

Raised in Alabama, Millard grew up in the Lanett Congregational Christian Church. In high school and college he served as president of the Pilgrim Fellowship youth organization of the Southeast Conference of Congregational Christian Churches. In the mid 1960s, Millard published a monthly newsletter arguing for the completion of the “realignment” merging the up till then separated white and African American congregations in the Southeast Conference. Millard and Linda started a Montgomery Christian Congregational Church. Following a marital crisis and reconciliation with his wife Linda, they sold their businesses and divested themselves of their wealth. For two years, Millard traveled the country speaking in churches raising funds for Tugaloo College, a UCC related school in Mississippi. It was in June of 1968 when Millard and Linda returned to Koinonia Farm in Americus, Georgia to work alongside Clarence Jordan to launch Koinonia Partners including Partnership Housing and the concept of a revolving loan fund they called “The Fund for Humanity.”



1966 Linda and Millard visiting Mbandaka



**1975 Millard looking at plans with a
construction foreman**

In 1973, Millard and Linda Fuller arrived in Mbandaka in the Democratic Republic of Congo (then called Zaire) to begin what

was to become history’s greatest effort to eliminate poverty housing and quite literally changed how churches do mission work. The Fullers were appointed to this position by Dr. Robert Nelson, Africa Secretary for the Christian Church [Disciples of Christ] and commissioned by the United Church Board for World Ministries. Having first visited the area in 1966 for the same board, Millard was intrigued the potential of a “Block and Sand Project” inherited by the UCC through some Disciples missionaries. The operation was in total disrepair, but because of a grant from the United Church Board for World Ministries Millard got it up and running.

Wanting to see if a Fund for Humanity could be successful in Africa, the Fullers began working in Mbandaka on donated land that was a dividing property separating the Africans and whites in colonial days called Bokotola which meant “man who does not care for others.” There they built the first 100 Habitat for Humanity houses, which still stand today as tribute to their vision. Four decades later, countless churches and volunteers carry on the Fuller’s dream around the globe as a result of the UCC work in Zaire.



**2008 David Snell, President of Fuller Center for Housing presenting
a Bible at a house blessing ceremony**

THE FULLER CENTER BOLOMBA LIKOLO

The Fuller Center Bolomba Likolo was organized in the summer of 2007. Despite its remote location, the absence of a local bank, no nearby store to purchase building materials, inadequate roads and transportation methods and an unpredictable rainy season, work progresses as the people of Bolomba pour their hearts and souls into the project.

Fuller Center President David Snell reflected, “Over 300,000 houses later, the vision born and work started in that remote corner of Africa has begun anew. “

BACKGROUND



The DRC is one of the poorest countries in the world, with a per capita annual income of about US\$300 in 2007. This is partly the result of years of war. Visiting Bolomba, accessed by a six-hour ride on a river boat from Mbandaka, is like taking a step back in time. It is a place without electricity, cell phones or litter where the people live off the river and the jungle.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE TRIP CONTACT:

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RECOMMENDED READING:

Bokotola by Millard Fuller (1977) <http://www.fullercenter.org/store/bokotola>

Beyond the American Dream by Millard Fuller (2010) <http://www.fullercenter.org/store/beyondtheamericandream>